

COOPERS-HILL. *67*

A
P O E M,

Written by the Honourable
Sir JOHN DENHAM,
Knight of the *Bath*.



L O N D O N :

Printed and Sold by *H. Hills*, in *Black-fryars*,
near the *Water-side*. 1700.

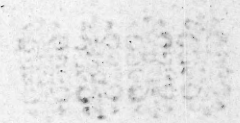
COOPER'S-HILL

P O E M

William Byrd's Honorable

ST JOHN DENHAM

Knight of the Bath



LONDON

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TO THE KING.

SIR,

After the delivery of Your Royal Father's Person into the hands of the Army, I undertaking to the Queen Mother, that I would find some means to get access to him she was pleased to send me, and by the help of Hugh Peters I got my admittance, and coming well instructed from the Queen (his Majesty having been long kept in the dark) he was pleased to discourse very freely with me of the whole state of his Affairs: But, Sir, I will not launch into a History, instead of an Epistle. One morning waiting on him at Caulham, smiling upon me, he said he could tell me some News of my self, which was, that he had seen some Verses of mine the Evening before (being those to Sir Richard Fanshawe) and asking me when I made them, I told him two or three years since; he was pleased to say, that having never seen them before, He was afraid I had written them since my return into England, and though he liked them well, he would advise me to write no more, alledging, that when men are young, and have little else to do, they might vent the overflowings of their Fancy that way; but when they were thought fit for more serious Employments, if they still persisted in that course, it would look as if they minded not the way to any better.

Whereupon I stood corrected as long as I had the honour to wait upon him, and at his departure from Hampton Court, he was pleased to command me to stay privately at London, to send to him and receive from him all his Letters from and to all his Correspondents at home and abroad, and I was furnish'd with nine several Cyphers in order to it: Which trust I performed with great safety, to the persons with whom we corresponded; but about nine months after being discovered by their knowledge of Mr. Cowley's Hand I happily escaped both for my self, and those that held correspondence with me; that time was too hot and busie for such idle speculations, but after I had the good fortune to wait upon Your Majesty in Holland and France, You were pleased sometimes to give me Arguments to divert and put off the evil hours of our Banishment, which now and then fell not short of Your Majesties expectation.

After, when Your Majesty departing from St. Germans to Jersey, was pleased freely (without my asking) to confer upon me that place wherein I have now the honour to serve You, I then gave over Poetical Lines,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and made it my business to draw such others as might be more serviceable to Your Majesty, and I hope more lasting. Since that time I never disobeyed my old Masters commands till this Summer at the Wells, my retirement there tempting me to divert those melancholy thoughts, which the new appetitions of Foreign invasion: and Domestick discontent gave us: But these Clouds being now happily blown over, and our Sun clearly shining out again, I have recovered the relapse, it being suspected that it would have proved the Epidemical Disease of Age, which is apt to fall back into the follies in Youth, yet Socrates, Aristotle and Cato did the same, and Scaliger saith, that Fragment of Aristotle was beyond any thing that Pindar or Homer ever wrote. I will not call this a Dedication, for those Epistles are commonly greater absurdities than any that come after: For what Author can reasonably believe, that fixing the Great Name of some eminent Patron in the Forehead of his Book can charm away censure, and that the first Leaf should be a Curtain to draw over and hide all the deformities that stand behind it? neither have I any need of such shifts, for most of the Parts of this Body have already had Your Majesties view, and having past the Test of so clear and sharp-sighted a Judgment, which has as good a Title to give Law in Matters of this Nature as in any other, they who shall presume to dissent from Your Majesty, will do more wrong to their own Judgment, than their Judgment can do to me. And for those latter Parts which have not yet received your Majesties favourable Aspect, if they who have seen them do not flatter me, (for I dare not trust my own Judgment) they will make it appear, that it is not with me as with most of Mankind, who never forsake their Darling Vices, till their Vices forsake them; and that this Divorce was not Frigiditatis causâ, but an Act of Choice, and not of Necessity, Therefore, Sir, I shall only call it an humble Petition, That Your Majesty will please to pardon this new Amour to my old Mistress, and my disobedience to his Commands, to whose Memory I look up with great Reverence and Devotion, and making a serious reflection upon that wise Advice, it carries much greater weight with it now, than when it was given; for when Age and Experience has so ripened mans Discretion as to make it fit for use, either in private or publick Affairs, nothing blasts and corrupts the fruit of it so much as the empty, airy reputation of being nimis Poeta, and therefore I shall take my leave of the Muses, as two of my Predecessors did, saying,

Splendidis longum vale dico nugis,
Hic versus & cætera ludicra pono.

Your Majesties most faithful
and loyal Subject, and most
dutiful and devoted Servant,

JO. DENHAM.

Coopers



Coopers-Hill.

Sure there are Poets which did never dream
 Upon *Parnassus*, nor did taste the Stream
 Of *Helicon*; we therefore may suppose
 Those made not Poets, but the Poets those.
 And as Courts make not Kings, but Kings the Court,
 So where the Muses and their Train resort,
Parnassus stands; if I can be to thee
 A Poet, thou *Parnassus* art to me.
 Nor wonder, if (advantag'd in my flight,
 By taking Wing from thy auspicious height)
 Through untrac'd ways, and aery paths I flye,
 More boundless in my Fancy than my eye:
 My eye, which swift as thought contracts the space
 That lyes between, and first salutes the place
 Crown'd with that sacred Pile, so vast, so high,
 That whether 'tis a part of Earth, or Sky,
 Uncertain seems, and may be thought a proud
 Aspiring Mountain, or descending Cloud:
Paul's, the late Theme of such a Muse whose flight *M. W.*
 Has bravely reach'd and soar'd above thy height;
 Now shalt thou stand, though Sword, or Time, or, Fire,
 Or Zeal more fierce than they, thy Fall conspire,

Secure, whilst thee the best of Poets sings;
Preserv'd from ruine by the best of Kings.

Under his proud survey the City lies,
And like a Mist beneath a Hill doth rise;
Whose state and wealth the business and the Crowd,
Seems at this distance but a darker Cloud:
And is to him who rightly things esteems,
No other in effect than what it seems:

Where, with like haste, though several ways, they run,
Some to undo, and some to be undone;
While Luxury and Wealth, like War and Peace,
Are each the others ruine, and encrease;
As Rivers Lost in Seas some secret Vein
Thence re-conveys, there to be lost again.

O happiness of sweet retir'd content!

To be at once secure, and innocent.

Windfor the next (where *Mars* with *Venus* dwells, *Windfor*
Beauty with strength) above the Vally swells.

Into my eye, and doth it self present
With such an easie and unforc't ascent,
That no stupendious precipice denies

Access, no horror turns away our eyes:

But such a Rise as doth at once invite

A pleasure and a reverence from the sight.

Thy mighty Masters Embleme, in whose face
State Meekness, heightned with Majestick Grace,
Such seems thy gentle Height, made only proud
To be the Basis of that pompous load,
Than which, a nobler weight no Mountain bears,
But *Atlas* only that supports the Sphears.

When

When Natures hand this ground did thus advance,
 'Twas guided by a wiser power than Chance;
 Mark'd out for such a use, as if 'twere meant
 T' invite the Builder, and his choic prevent.
 Nor can we call it choice, when what we chuse,
 Folly, or Blindness only could refuse.
 A Crown of such Majestick Tow'rs doth grace
 The Gods great Mother, when her heavenly race
 Do homage to her, yet she cannot boast
 Amongst that numerous, and Celestial Host,
 More *Hero's* than can *Windsor*, nor doth *Fames*
 Immortal Book record more noble Names.
 Not to look back so far, to whom this Isle
 Owes the first Glory of so brave a Pile,
 Whether to *Cæsar*, *Albanact*, or *Brute*,
 The British *Arthur*, or the Danish *Knute*,
 (Though this of old no less contest did move,
 Than when for *Homer's* Birth seven Cities strove)
 Like him in Birth, thou should'st be like in Fame,
 (As thine his Fate, if mine had been his Flame)
 But whosoe'r it was, Nature design'd
 First a brave place, and then as brave a mind.
 Not to recount those several Kings, to whom
 It gave a Cradle, or to whom a Tomb,
 But thee (great * *Edward*) and thy greater Son,
 (The Lilies which his Father wore, he won)
 And thy † *Bellona*, who the Consort came
 Not only to thy Bed; but to thy Fame,

* *Edward Third*, and she *Black Prince*, † *Queen Philip*.

* She to thy Triumph led one Captive King,
 And brought that Son, which did the second bring.
 Then didst thou found that Order, (whether love
 Or victory thy Royal thoughts did move)
 Each was a Noble Cause, and nothing less
 Than the design, has been the great success:
 Which Foreign Kings and Emperours esteem
 The second honour to their Diadem.
 Had thy great Destiny but giv'n the skill,
 To know, as well as power to act her will,
 That from those Kings, who then thy Captives were,
 In after times should spring a Royal Pair,
 Who should possess all that thy mighty power,
 Or thy desires more mighty, did devour;
 To whom their better Fate reserves what e'er
 The Victor hopes for, or the Vanquish'd fear;
 That Blood, which thou and thy Great Grandfire shed,
 And all that since these Sister Nations bled,
 Had been unsplrit, had happy *Edward* known
 That all the Blood he spilt, had been his own.
 When he that Patern chose, in whom are joyn'd
 Souldier and Martyr, and his arm's confin'd
 Within the azure Circle, he did seem
 But to foretel, and prophesie of him,
 Who to his Realms that Azure round hath joyn'd,
 Which Nature for their Bound at first design'd.
 That Bound, which to the VVorlds extreamest ends,
 Endless it self, it's liquid arms extends;

* The Kings of France and Scotland.

Nor doth he need those Emblems which we paint;
 But is himself the Souldier and the Saint.
 Here should my wonder dwell, and here my praise;
 But my fixt thoughts my wandring eye betrays,
 Viewing a Neighbouring Hill, whose top of late
 A Chapel crown'd, till in the common Fate,
 The adjoyning Abbey fell : (may no such storm
 Fall on our Times, were ruine must reform.)
 Tell me (my Muse) what monstrous dire offence;
 What crime could any Christian King incense
 To such a rage? Was't Luxury, or Lust?
 Was he so temperate, so chaste, so just?
 Were these their crimes? they were his own much more :
 But Wealth is crime enough to him that's poor,
 Who having spent the Treasures of his Crown,
 Condemns their Luxury to feed his own.
 And yet this Act, to varnish o'r the shame
 Of Sacriledge, must bear Devotions Name.
 No crime so bold, but would be understood
 A real, or at least a seeming good.
 Who fears not to do ill, yet fears the Name,
 And free from Conscience is a Slave to Fame.
 Thus he the Church at once protects, and spoils :
 But Princes Swords are sharper than their stiles.
 And thus to th' Ages past he makes amends,
 Their Charity destroys, their Faith defends.
 Then did Religion in a lazy Cell,
 In emty, aery Contemplations dwell ;
 And like the Block, unmoved lay : but ours,
 As much to active, like the Stork devours.

Is there no temperate Region can be known;
 Betwixt their Frigid, and our Torrid Zone ?
 Could we not wake from that Lethargick Dream;
 But to be restless in a worse Extream ?
 And for that Lethargy was there no Cure,
 But to be cast into a Calenture ?
 Can knowledge have no bound, but must advance
 So far, to make us wish for ignorance ?
 And rather in the dark to grope our way,
 Than led by a false Guide to erre by day ?
 VVho sees these dismal Heaps, but would demand
 VVhat barbarous Invader sack'd the Land ?
 But when he hears, no Goth, no Turk did bring
 This desolation, but a Christian King ;
 VVhen nothing, but the Name of Zeal, appears
 'Twixt our best actions, and the worst of theirs,
 VVhat does he think our Sacriledge would spare,
 VVhen such th' effects of our Devotion are ?
 Parting from thence 'twixt anger shame and fear,
 Those for what's past, and this for what's too near :
 My eye descending from the Hill, surveys
 VVhere *Thames* amongst the wanton Vallies strays.
Thames, the most lov'd of all the Oceans Sons, *Thames*.
 By his old Sire to his embraces runs,
 Hast'ning to pay his tribute to the Sea,
 Like mortal life to meet Eternity.
 Though with those streams he no resemblance hold,
 VVhose foam is Amber, and their Gravel Gold ;
 His genuine, and less guilty wealth t' explore,
 Search not his bottom, but survey his shore ;

O're which he kindly spreads his spacious wing:
 And hatches plenty forth' ensuing Spring.
 Nor then destroys it with too fond a stay,
 Like Mothers which their infants overlay:
 Nor with a sudden and impetuous wave,
 Like profuse Kings, resumes the wealth he gave:
 No unexpected inundations spoil
 The Mowers hopes, nor mock the plowmans toyl:
 But Godlike his unwearied Bounty flows;
 First loves to do, then loves the Good he does:
 Nor are his Blessings to his banks confin'd,
 But free, and common, as the Sea or Wind;
 When he to boast or to disperse his stores
 Full of the tributes of his grateful shores,
 Visits the World, and in his flying towers
 Brings home to us, and makes both *Indies* ours;
 Finds wealth where 'tis, bestows it where it wants;
 Cities in desarts, Woods in Cities plants.
 So that to us no thing, no place is strange,
 While his fair bosom is the Worlds exchange.
 O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
 My great example, as it is my theme!
 Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
 Strong without rage, without o're-flowing full.
 Heaven her *Eridanus* no more shall boast,
 Whose Fame in thine, like lesser Currents lost,
 Thy Nobler streams shall visit *Jove's* aboads,
 To shine amongst the Stars, and bathe the Gods,
 Here Nature, whether more intent to please
 Us, or her self, with strange varieties,

The Forrest.

(For

(For things of wonder give no less delight
 To the wise Makers, than Beholders sight.
 Though these delights from several causes move;
 For so our Children, thus our Friends we love)
 Wisely she knew the harmony of things,
 As well as that of sounds, from discords springs.
 Such was the discord, which did first disperse
 From, Order, Beauty, through the Universe;
 While driness moisture, coldness heat resists,
 All that we have, and that we are subsists.
 While the steep horrid roughness of the Wood
 Strive with the gentle calmness of the flood.
 Such huge extreams when Nature doth unite,
 Wonder from thence results, from thence delight.
 The stream is so transparent, pure, and clear, *Narcissus.*
 That had the self-enamour'd Youth gaz'd here,
 So fatally deceiv'd he had not been,
 While he the bottom, not his face had seen.
 But his proud head the aery Mountain hides
 Among the Clouds; his shoulders, and his sides
 A shady Mantle clothes; his curled Brows
 Frown on the gentle Stream, which calmly flows;
 While winds and Storms his lofty Forehead beat
 The common Fate of all that's High or Great.
 Low at his Foot a spacious Plain is plac'd,
 Between the Mountain and the Stream embrac'd:
 VWhich Shade and Shelter from the Hill derives,
 VWhile the kind River VVealth and Beauty gives;
 And in the mixture of all these appears
 Variety, which all the rest indears.

This

13
This Scene, had some bold Greek, or British bard
Beheld of old, what Stories had we heard,
Of Fairies, Satyrs, and the Nymphs their Dames,
Their feasts, their revels, and their amorous flames?
'Tis still the same, although their aery shape,
All but a quick Poetick sight escape.
There *Faunus* and *Silvanus* keep their Courts,
And thither all the horned Hoast resorts,
To graze the ranker Mead, that noble heard
On whose sublime and shady fronts is rear'd
Natures great Master-piece; to shew how soon
Great things are made, but sooner are undone.
Here have I see the King, when great Affairs
Gave leave to slacken, and unbend his cares,
Attended to the Chase by all the flower
Of Youth, whose hopes a nobler prey devour:
Pleasure with praise, and danger, they would buy,
And wish a Foe that would not only fly.
The Stag now conscious of his fatal Growth,
At once indulgent to his Fear and Sloth,
To some dark Convert his retreat had made,
VWhere no Mans eye, nor Heaven's should invade
His soft repose; when th' unexpected sound
Of Dogs, and Men, his wakeful ear doth wound:
Rouz'd with the noise, he scarce believes his ear:
Willing to think th' illusions of his fear
Had given this false Alarm, but strait his view
Confirms, that more than all he fears is true:
Betray'd in all his Strengths, the VWood beset,
All Instruments, all Arts of Ruine met

He

He calls to mind his Strength, and then his Speed,
 His winged Heels, and then his armed Head ;
 VVith these t^a avoid, with that his Fate to meet :
 But fear prevails, and bids him trust his Feet.
 So fast he flies, that his reviewing eye
 Has lost the Chafers, and his ear the Cry :
 Exulting, till he finds, their Nobler Sense
 Their disproportion'd Speed does recompense.
 Then curses his conspiring Feet, who scent
 Betrays that safety, which their swiftness lent.
 Then tries his Friends, among the baser heard,
 VVhere he so lately was obey'd, and fear'd,
 His safety seeks : the Herd, unkindly wise,
 Or chafes him from thence, or from him flies.
 Like a declining States men, left forlorn
 To his Friends pity, and Pursuers scorn ;
 VVith shame remembers, while himself was one
 Of the same Herd, himself the same had done.
 Thence to the Coverts, and the conscious Groves,
 The Scenes of his past Triumphs, and his Loves ;
 Sadly surveying where he rang'd alone
 Prince of the Soil, and all the Herd his own ;
 And like a bold Knight Errant did proclaim
 Combat to all, and bore away the Dame ;
 And taught the VVoods to Echo to the Stream
 His dreadful Challenge, and his clashing Beam :
 Yet faintly now declines the fatal strife ;
 So much his Love was dearer than his Life.
 Now every Leaf, and every moving Breath,
 Presents a Foe, and every Foe a Death.

VVearied

(15)
VVearied, forsaken, and pursu'd, at last
All safety in despair of safety plac'd,
Courage he thence resumes, resolv'd to bear
All their assaults, since 'tis in vain to fear.
And now too late he wishes for the fight,
That strength he wasted in ignoble flight:
But when he sees the eager Chase renew'd
Himself by Dogs, the Dogs by Men pursu'd:
He straight revokes his bold resolve, and more
Repents his courage, than his fear before;
Finds that uncertain ways unsafest are,
And Doubt a greater mischief than Despair.
Then to the Straem, when neither Friends, nor Force,
Nor Speed, nor Art avail, he shaps his course;
Thinks not their rage so desperate t' assay
An Element more merciless than they.
But fearless they pursue, nor can the Flood
Quench their dire Thirst; alas, they thirst for Blood,
So toward a Ship the oarefin'd Gallies ply,
VVhich wanting Sea to ride, or VVind to fly,
Stands but to fall reveng'd on those that dare
Tempt the last fury of extream Despair.
So fares the Stag among the enraged Hounds,
Repels their force, and wounds returns for wounds
And as a Hero, whom his baser Foes
In Troops surrounds, now these assails, now those,
Though Prodigal of life, disdains to dye
By common hands; but if he can descry
Some nobler Foes approach, to him he calls,
And begs his Fate, and then contented falls.
So when the King a mortal Shaft lets flye
From his unerring hand, then glad to dye,
Proud of the wound, to it resigns his Blood,
And stains the Crystal with a Purple Flood.
This a more innocent and happy Chase,
Than when of old, but in the self-same place,

*Fair

* Fair Liberty pursu'd, and meant a Prey
 To lawless power, here turn'd, and stood at Bay.
 When in that remedy all hope was plac'd,
 Which was, or should have been at least, the last.
 Here was that Charter seal'd, wherein the Crown †
 All marks of Arbitrary Power lays down:
 Tyrant and Slave, those Names of hate and fear,
 The happier Style of King and Subject bear:
 Happy, when both to the same Center move,
 When Kings give Liberty, and Subjects Love.
 Therefore not long in force this Charter stood;
 Wanting that Seal, it must be seal'd in Blood.
 The Subjects arm'd, the more their Princes gave,
 Th' advantage only took the more to crave.
 Till Kings by giving, give themselves away,
 And even that power that should deny, betray.
 " VVho gives constrain'd, but his own fear reviles,
 " Nor thank't, but scorn'd; nor are they gifts, but spoils;
 Thus Kings, by grasping more than they could hold,
 First made their Subjects by oppression bold:
 And popular sway, by forcing Kings to give
 More than was fit for Subjects to receive,
 Ran to the same extreams; and one excess
 Made both, by striving to be greater, less.
 VVhen a calm River rais'd with sudden rains,
 Or Snows dissolv'd; o'rflows the adjoyning Plains,
 The Husbandmen with high-rais'd banks secure
 Their greedy hopes, and this he can endure,
 But if with Bays and Dams, they strive to force
 His Chanel to a new or narrow course;
 No longer then within his banks he dwells,
 First to a Torrent, then a Deluge swells
 Stronger and fiercer; by restraint he roars,
 And knows no bound, but makes his power his shores.

* Runny Mead, where that Great Charter was first seal'd. † Magna
 Charta.